



# What we're doing in Vermont

U.S. EPA | STORMWATER OUTREACH AT EPA NEW ENGLAND



**STORMWATER** is a leading cause of poor water quality. Rain or melted snow runs down driveways, sidewalks and streets carrying oil, dirt and other pollutants into nearby waterways. Polluted runoff, which can cause erosion and flooding, runs into waterways and degrades plants, fish, shellfish and other wildlife. In water used for recreation, the runoff can lead to illness, and people who eat contaminated fish can also become sick. Untreated stormwater can also contaminate drinking water sources.

## INTRO:

The state of Vermont runs both the National Pollution Discharge Elimination System stormwater program and a separate state stormwater permitting program that applies to many parcels outside the scope of the federal program. Under the federal program, construction sites disturbing more than one acre, industrial sites and some municipalities must get permits. Each town or city with a municipal permit must also have a local stormwater management program. The separate state Stormwater Permit Program addresses runoff from nonporous surfaces like rooftops, parking areas and roads.

## TO MANAGE STORMWATER IN VERMONT WE ARE:

**Hiring a statewide expert** — A "Green Infrastructure Coordinator" was hired by the state Department of Environmental Conservation in 2009 to help the state as well as towns and cities find innovative ways to manage stormwater. The state is working with its 11 regional planning commissions to promote greater use of green infrastructure. The state also produced the "Small Sites Guide for Stormwater Management," which describes low impact development options for smaller developments such as single family homes.

**Limiting discharges** — Twelve streams in the Burlington, St. Albans and Rutland areas damaged by stormwater should begin to improve soon thanks to reductions required in the volume of stormwater they can receive. EPA-approved total maximum daily loads (TMDLs), which typically set maximum targets for individual pollutants, were used in this case to set targets for the overall volume of stormwater runoff. These TMDLs call for between 2 and 65 percent reduction of stormwater discharge. The new small municipal separate storm sewer system (MS4s) permits (in draft form as of summer of 2010) will require affected towns and

cities to meet the reduction targets. The state DEC will be working with these communities to help them come up with ways to reduce stormwater runoff at developments and comply with the new permits.

**Funding the controls** — The South Burlington Stormwater Utility was the first utility of its kind in Vermont. It helps raise more than \$1 million a year through user fees to pay for a program aimed at reducing stormwater impacts to local streams.

**Using green approaches** — More than 50 rain gardens, which capture and filter stormwater on-site have been installed around Vermont with the help of a rain garden manual developed by conservation organizations and the University of Vermont. In addition, porous pavements have been installed at places as diverse as a Park and Ride lot in Randolph and municipal offices in South Burlington.

*All of the projects listed above received EPA funding or support.*

## KEY CONTACTS:

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